

HALLORAN & SAGE
Government Affairs, LLC

2016 General Assembly Issues

State Budget

As many of your members have been reading the fiscal picture in Connecticut is not improving and is quickly becoming the dominate issue once again for the members of the General Assembly. As of today we are looking at a 72 million dollar for the current fiscal year which ends June 30th 2016 – the projections for the deficit for year 2 of the current biannual budget are nearing 500 million – the governor will unveil his budget proposal to fix the deficit next Wednesday at noon so we will have a clear understanding of what direction he is going – the legislature desperately wants to go into session and adjourn without making any difficult decisions that could have implications on their re-elections - as we all know that is the main concern of most elected officials, getting re-elected. I think our best prediction at this time is to speculate that modest reductions may be made in areas of the budget but that most if not all of the actions will consist of smoke and mirrors to get to the elections and the real difficult decisions will be forthcoming in 2017. This leads directly into one of our focus areas - repeal the tax on surgery centers - we will have a bill introduced and heard before the Finance committee to repeal the tax - it will be our goal to show in public for the first time on record that this tax hurts patients and will ultimately, if not addressed drive patients into higher cost settings that is not only bad for patients but also will drive up the cost for care and cost the state more money in the long run.

Public Health

We will be once again introducing legislation on behalf of the medical assistants to allow them to administer vaccines through injections under proper supervision in Connecticut – we will be battling the nurses on this issue but feel confident we can build off the momentum from last year and finally get this ability for MA's in CT.

Definition of Surgery is an area I know many physicians would like to see a statute be put in place – in discussions with numerous legislators there does not appear to be the willingness to take this issue up for debate in the short session and to have this be something that might be looked at in 2017.

Judiciary

The trial bar will once again be introducing legislation to address the tolling statutes and pass a law that allows action to be brought many years after an injury occurs – we will be steadfast in our opposition to this bill and work once again to see its defeat in the process.

Malpractice Reform – we are working with the House Chair of the Judiciary committee to try and introduce legislation to have a comprehensive review of the malpractice system in Connecticut during the interim and have a recommendation for discussion in the 2017 session – this review would consist of Health Courts, possible Caps on damages, tolling, the impact on rates with physician retention and recruitment, the aging population of our physician workforce, and any other items that may be considered by the chairs.

Insurance

We are working with the chairs of the Insurance committee to introduce legislation to address issues with network adequacy – it is our intention to ensure that any and all networks in Connecticut have adequate numbers of PHYSICIAN enrollment to meet the needs of their enrollees.

This, in a nutshell is what our best outlook is for the upcoming session at this time – please understand it is a very fluid process and bills will begin being introduced on Wednesday February 3rd of next week – we will continue to keep you and your members in the loop and look forward to a productive session.

Thank you and all of your Physician members for their continued efforts to assist in our legislative battles – our strength and our success is clearly contingent on Physician input and engagement.

William J. Malitsky
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